



# FLUALERT

FOR ADULTS 65+, IT'S TIME TO GET  
SERIOUS ABOUT FLU PREVENTION

## STAY HEALTHY THIS FLU SEASON

Influenza (flu) is a contagious, respiratory illness that **can be severe and life-threatening**, especially for older adults.<sup>1</sup> Even as a healthy adult, it's important to help protect yourself from this potentially debilitating disease. For those suffering from chronic health conditions such as heart disease, diabetes, and asthma, flu can be especially serious. Because the immune system weakens with age, making it harder to fight disease, flu can be particularly severe for older adults.

The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends annual flu vaccination for everyone 6 months of age and older, with rare exception, as the **single best way** to help prevent flu each season.<sup>1</sup>

## THE TRUTH ABOUT FLU

- About one third of adults age 65 years and older are unaware that individuals with chronic health conditions **are at greater risk for complications from flu.**<sup>2</sup>
- **Every 4 minutes, an adult age 65 years and older is hospitalized** due to flu or flu-related complications.<sup>3</sup>
- **Every 12 minutes, an adult age 65 years and older dies** from flu or flu-related complications.<sup>4</sup>
- Combined with pneumonia, flu is 1 of the **top 10 leading causes of death** in older adults in the US.<sup>4</sup>
- One third of adults in the US age 65 years and older **do not get vaccinated against flu.**<sup>5</sup>
- Adults age 65 years and older typically account for more than half (**50 to 70 percent**) of **flu-related hospitalizations and most (up to 85 percent) flu-related deaths.**<sup>2</sup>
- There are far more flu-related deaths and hospitalizations in adults age 65 years and older than in any other age group.<sup>3</sup> During the 2015-2016 influenza season, adults age 65 years and older experienced:
  - **1.7 million estimated illnesses**
  - **944,631 estimated medical visits**
  - **153,349 estimated hospitalizations**

## WHICH FLU VACCINE IS RIGHT FOR YOU?

Certain flu vaccines are developed specifically for older adults to address the natural, age-related weakening of the immune system. If you are age 65 years or older, talk to your healthcare provider about which flu vaccine is right for you.

During the 2015-2016 flu season, CDC estimates that influenza vaccination prevented the following:<sup>3</sup>

- 5.1 million influenza illnesses
- 2.5 million influenza-associated medical visits
- 71,000 influenza-associated hospitalizations

Visit [www.nfid.org/flualert](http://www.nfid.org/flualert) for more information



1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Key Facts about Influenza (Flu). <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/keyfacts.htm>. Accessed September 5, 2017. 2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). What You Should Know and Do this Flu Season If You Are 65 Years and Older. <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/disease/65over.htm>. Accessed September 5, 2017. 3. CDC. Estimated Influenza Illnesses, Medical Visits, Hospitalizations, and Deaths Averted by Vaccination in the United States. <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/disease/2015-16.htm>. Accessed September 5, 2017. 4. CDC. National Vital Statistics Report. Deaths: Final Data for 2014. [https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr65/nvsr65\\_04.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr65/nvsr65_04.pdf). Accessed September 5, 2017. 5. NFID, Call to Action: Reinvigorating Influenza Prevention in US Adults Age 65 Years and Older, September 5, 2017.